

*A bipartisan group of more than 90 Members of Congress support call to quickly bring emergency funding legislation to the House floor*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Representative Paul Tonko (NY-21) and U.S. Representative Richard Hanna (NY-24)**

today sent a letter to Speaker John Boehner and House leadership asking for immediate action to bring legislation for emergency disaster funding to the House floor to ensure that Recovery efforts for natural disasters across the country will continue in the wake of Hurricane Irene.

The letter has been co-signed by a bipartisan group of more than 90 House members.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Disaster Relief Fund has been depleted over the course of the year, and is in critical need of additional resources to provide a helping hand to Americans who have fallen victim to recent disasters like Irene.

**"We need to act swiftly and decisively to provide the resources our homeowners, small businesses, farmers, not-for-profits, and communities need to recover and rebuild from Hurricane Irene – and replenish funds needed for other natural disasters across the country," Tonko said. "We must set aside our political differences and move quickly to respond to the needs of Americans who are hurting through no fault of their own."**

**"This is a time to pull together and recognize the pain and suffering of those Americans and New Yorkers affected by Hurricane Irene," Hanna said. "This nation helps its own during extraordinary times of need. I urge Congress to act quickly to pass appropriate and necessary disaster funding legislation. The needs are real and time is of the essence."**

The text of the letter is copied below:

The Honorable John Boehner

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
Representatives

Minority Leader, U.S. House of

The Honorable Eric Cantor  
Majority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives  
Representatives

The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
Minority Whip, U.S. House of

The Honorable Hal Rogers  
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee  
Committee

The Honorable Norm Dicks  
Ranking Member, House Appropriations

Dear Sirs and Madam:

We write to ask for prompt action in bringing to the House floor emergency funding legislation for ongoing disaster relief in the wake of Hurricane Irene. Such decisive action is necessary to ensure that the already depleted Disaster Relief Fund and other federal programs involved in disaster assistance do not run out of the funds necessary for recovery efforts.

Hurricane Irene and the flooding that followed in its wake caused massive destruction to homes, businesses and farms up and down the East Coast. Given the scope of the devastation caused by this disaster, it is eminently clear that state and local officials in the affected areas cannot bear the burden of responding alone. With a Major Disaster Declaration in place, many families, farmers, businesses and communities are eligible for, registering for and starting to receive disaster assistance through FEMA, USDA and other federal agencies.

Unfortunately, programs for disaster relief have been pushed to their limits this year after tornadoes and floods demanded a helping hand for communities in the Midwest and the South. Now, as the Eastern Seaboard struggles to stand up after a devastating blow, FEMA has announced it must shift to only “immediate needs funding” – a more limited response effort – to preserve and prioritize what little disaster funding it has on hand. This announcement means disaster recovery projects nationwide will be delayed and that rebuilding in the wake of Irene cannot begin in earnest until this Congress acts to deliver emergency funding for programs that can help those in need.

As we witness ongoing suffering in the wake of natural disasters across the country, there is no question that the House must act quickly to provide necessary humanitarian assistance to our fellow Americans in need. For those who have lost homes, loved ones and livelihoods, there is no justification for anything less than the best we have to offer.

We respectfully ask that you bring an emergency disaster relief funding measure to the floor swiftly in order to ensure that full response and recovery efforts can proceed at a pace and scope befitting the greatest nation on earth.

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